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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2006

In Today's Papers

Turkish Parliament Discuss Violence in Southeast Turkey
All papers: Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu yesterday told a parliament gathering to discuss rising terror in southeast Turkey that talks were underway with Denmark to ban the Copenhagen-based Kurdish broadcaster Roj-TV. Aksu said following the killing of 14 PKK terrorists by security forces in Bingol on March 25, Roj-TV had provoked people to rally for protest in the cities in the region and in Istanbul. In the incidents, 15 were killed and 418 arrested, Aksu said. The main opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal urged the government to take effective measures against terror, and called for direct state investments in southeast Turkey. "It is impossible to solve the problem by dividing the nation along ethnic lines," Baykal said. Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said in response to the request for a meeting by Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP that the DTP should first declare that the PKK is a terrorist organization. Lawyer Hasip Kaplan, the deputy chairman of the DTP, told the press that Hamas was on the list of terror organizations, but that the AKP government met with its representatives. Kaplan said that the AKP was adhering to a double-standard when on the one hand it wanted DTP to recognize the the PKK as terrorists while on the other hand holding meetings themselves with Hamas.

Papers report two new investigations have been launched against the Mayor of Diyarbakir, Osman Baydemir, for propagandizing in support of an outlawed organization, and for giving municipal vehicles to PKK members during the rallies. Police on Tuesday detained four provincial administrators of DTP in Diyarbakir.

Concerns over New Turkish Anti-Terror Bill

Radikal reports the EU welcomed the statement by Justice

Minister Cemil Cicek that Turkey would adjust its definition of terrorism to fit EU rules while reforming its anti-terror law. EU said it will give Turkey all necessary support, calling on the AKP government to stress human rights during the process. Leftist Birgun, underlining intentions for restriction of travel, communications and some other areas in southeast Turkey, claims the new anti-terror bill drafted by the government would pave the way to emergency rule in the mainly Kurdish region. Jurists said the bill included tighter measures against terrorism than another controversial anti-terror bill adopted by Britain.

Serdar Turgut wrote in the tabloid Aksam on the draft anti-terror bill that it is normal and the rule of democracy that there will be differences of opinion between the civilian authority and the military in Turkey. "These kinds of differences should not be exaggerated. Everyone should understand that certain concessions should be made in order to fight against terrorism. The AKP Government is rather hesitant to give any concessions because there are promises given to the EU, plus, the AKP is concerned that some of the concessions could affect religious freedom. We can understand both these concerns but no one should put these concerns before the State's rights. If one surrenders to this kind of concern, then terrorist activities will explode in the country. The draft terrorism law shows that the civil authority and the military have already overcome the differences and agreed on the draft."

Gul on Violence in Southeast Turkey, Iran

All papers: On Tuesday, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul told media representatives in Ankara that a new wave of reforms would be disclosed soon. Gul noted terrorist activities

ANKARA 00001813 002 OF 004

increase when there are favorable developments in the country like local broadcasts in the Kurdish language in southeast Turkey. "We must not fall into the trap of the PKK. The only way to live together in Turkey is with democracy; the terrorist organization aims to disrupt democratic and economic developments in Turkey," Gul said. The FM stressed that Turkey opposed the emergence of a nuclear power in its region, adding that later this week he would discuss with Turkish ambassadors and diplomats the recent developments in Iran. Gul noted the US favored a diplomatic solution to the Iranian problem. Turkey and Iran have the right to use nuclear energy for civilian purposes, Gul said, quoting IAEA chief Muhammad al-Baradei as saying that Turkey needed five nuclear power plants.

Kirkuk Census in July Next Year

Cumhuriyet reports the program of the new government to be formed in Iraq requires that in 2007, a census be held in Kirkuk on July 31 followed by a referendum on November 15.

Bryza Visits Ankara

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Vatan, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others: Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza warned after wrapping up meetings in the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) Turkey should meet its responsibility of opening its ports and airports to the Greek Cypriots, and called on the EU to end the isolation of Turkish Cypriots. Bryza said it was up to the Greek Cypriot side to convince the UN Secretary General that they are ready to reengage in talks for a settlement. Bryza said the US was doing everything it can with the Europeans to cut the support that is going to the PKK from Europe. Bryza added that the US believed the Copenhagen-based Kurdish broadcaster Roj TV should be closed.

Bakoyannis Meets Papadopoulos

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Zaman and others report during her visit to Nicosia, the Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis briefed President Papadopolus about her talks in the US with Secretary Rice and UNSYG Annan. Bakoyannis said Cyprus need to make use of the new

momentum on the issue, urging Papadopoluos not to stay away from the negotiating table. She also urged Turkey to meet its responsibilities and open Turkish ports and airspace to the Greek Cypriots. Papadopoulos said if Ankara does not do so, a crisis between Turkey and the EU will be seen during the evaluation of the accession process in October.

Ambassador Wilson on US-Turkey Ties

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others: US Ambassador in Ankara, Ross Wilson, told a meeting of Turkish-American Businessmen Council (TABA) in Istanbul that Turkey made unbelievable reforms in judiciary, that state security courts and crimes committed against the state were scrapped, and that trials for torture began proceeding faster. Cumhuriyet commented Wilson did not hide that there were problems in ties with Turkey, and stressed the partnership should be redefined. Wilson said the Hamas visit to Turkey had caused disappointment in Washington, adding that bilateral ties in general had been "disappointing" over the past few years. "We have been trying to rebuild the relationship over the course of the last 8-9 months," Wilson said.

Returning home from a visit to the United States, Osman Ulagay writes in the mainstream Milliyet that just like the Bush Administration, the AKP government and PM Erdogan has entered into a period full of difficulties. "AKP government relations continue to deteriorate with the EU, US and with

ANKARA 00001813 003 OF 004

Turkish voters which carried the party to power in the last elections. On the other hand, the Bush Administration is going through a very hard period. The fiasco in Iraq decreased American people's support for Bush to thirty percent; the Bush Administration was unable to determine a policy against Iran; there was great disappointment with the Hamas victory in Palestine and moreover, almost all of the South American leaders are anti-American. Anything could be expected from a US Administration which is feeling cornered. If the AKP government puts further distance between itself and the US Administration just to give a message to its voters, we can end up in a rather different position in our relationship with the US. And, it is not easy to guess who is going to benefit from all these developments."

Citigroup Wants Turkey's Akbank

Hurriyet cites a Wall Street Journal report claiming the US-based Citigroup, after losing Turkish Finansbank to the Greek National Bank, was now looking to buy the Sabanci Group's Akbank. Radikal reports the Greek National Bank said after the purchase of Euro 2.3 billion that they had made an investment in Turkey's future. The paper also carries the Greek daily To Vima comment that the purchase was a "helping hand" extended by PM Karamanlis to PM Erdogan.

TV Highlights

NTV, 8 AM

Domestic News

- Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said a new democratization package would be unveiled soon despite the rise in terror attacks. Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu told the parliament that the PKK received international support. CHP leader Deniz Baykal claimed some political movements and municipality officials were linked to the PKK.

- Turkish jandarma found 10 kg of A-4 plastic explosives concealed in a sack in a graveyard in Istanbul, the Governor's Office said.

- Istanbul Greek Patriarchate said the EU should press Turkey to recognize the ecumenical status of the Patriarchate.

International News

- PKK militants attacked Turkish businesses and shops in Berlin and London.
- Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis paid a two-day visit to south Cyprus.
- The Czech Senate will host a conference on Armenian genocide claims next week despite Turkish efforts to block the gathering.
- The court trying Saddam Hussein said the former Iraqi dictator will face new charges of genocide against Kurds in the 1980s.
- A federal jury has decided Zacarias Moussaoui, the only man on trial in the US for involvement in 9/11 attacks, was fit for execution.

Economy News

- EU to provide Euro 2 billion support for Turkish farmers.
- Foreigners bought 21,000 homes in the Aegean region of

ANKARA 00001813 004 OF 004

Turkey over the last two years.

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) will gather in Istanbul on November 23-24.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

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